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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LONDON 001229

SIPDIS

DOJ FOR JOHN RUSCH  
DEPARTMENT FOR INL

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [SNAR](#) [SMIG](#) [KCOR](#) [KCRM](#) [KFRD](#) [NI](#) [XY](#) [UK](#)  
SUBJECT: WEST AFRICA/NIGERIA: UK PLANS TO INCREASE  
ANTI-CRIME, ANTI-DRUG SUPPORT; CONTINUE WORK WITH EFCC IN  
NIGERIA

REF: A. 08 LONDON 2499  
[1](#)B. 08 LONDON 3165  
[1](#)C. 08 LONDON 2917

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Classified By: Political Counselor Richard Mills, reasons 1.4 (b/d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary. To stem drug trafficking, money laundering, and immigration fraud in West Africa that directly affects the UK, the UK's Serious Organized Crime Agency (SOCA) plans to increase its presence and support to the region, including through opening a new office in Senegal in October 2009, SOCA Africa program officers Mike Davey and Colin Woodcock told Poloff and visiting Nigeria Desk Officer on May 20. SOCA aims to build local capacity in combating organized crime. SOCA plans to continue its working-level coordination with Nigeria's Economic and Finance Crimes Commission (EFCC) in spite of the EFCC's refusal to move on high-level political cases because of some prior EFCC fraud operations have resulted in halting or interdicting contraband or frauds worth millions of Pounds. SOCA and the UK High Commission, however, will continue to push the EFCC to do more on high-level political cases. SOCA welcomes greater cooperation with the USG on programming in the region. The UK's domestic concerns about fraud will likely continue to trump any UK interest in taking a hard-line stance on high-level political corruption in Nigeria. End Summary.

SOCA: Doing More in West Africa  
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[1](#)2. (C) From its current offices in Nigeria, Ghana, and Sierra Leone, the UK Serious Organized Crime Agency (SOCA) has had anti-drug trafficking, anti-money laundering, and anti-immigration fraud successes such that it plans to increase its programming in the region and open a fourth office in Senegal in October 2009, SOCA Africa program officers Mike Davey and Colin Woodcock told Poloff and visiting Nigeria Desk Officer May 20. SOCA aims to build local capacity through its field offices to combat organized crime and conduct joint anti-fraud operations on an ad hoc basis. Davey cited as an example the operation, conducted jointly with U.S. authorities in 2006 in Nigeria, that resulted in the seizures of hundreds of fraudulently obtained Nigerian passports, the return to the UK Government of GBP 1.5 million (USD 2.25 million) in fraudulently obtained social security benefits, and the halting of an estimated GBP 4.5 million (USD 6.75 million) in other criminal activities.

[1](#)3. (C) Successes like these that directly benefit the UK Government coffers, Davey explained, have resulted in SOCA's push to expand its operations in the region, especially in local capacity building and e-crime related activity. Davey

said SOCA will install a customs scanning facility in Ghana in June, which should benefit coverage of Benin and Togo as well because of centralized mail systems. SOCA also plans to do more in the region on anti-drug trafficking and welcomes greater cooperation with the USG on programming in the region.

Nigeria: Continue to Work with the EFCC

14. (C) Given the success SOCA has had on working-level operations with Nigeria's Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Davey said the UK Government will continue to work closely with the EFCC in spite of the EFCC's reticence to prosecute high-level political cases. Davey noted that SOCA and the UK High Commission in Nigeria will continue to press the EFCC to do more on high-level political cases, but said that both the U.S. and UK had benefited from anti-fraud cooperation with the EFCC. Davey said the EFCC had recently concluded MOUs with Yahoo, Google, and Microsoft, and SOCA plans to expand cooperation on e-crime. Davey noted that the new Director of the EFCC's Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) seems "very keen, but has not been great on follow-through."

Comment

15. (C) As described in reftels, the UK's complicated relations with Nigeria on criminal and legal issues (including the corruption case in the UK against former Niger Delta State Governor James Ibori) has caused the UK Government to take a very pragmatic view in its relations with Nigeria on crime, fraud, and corruption. Given the level of Nigeria-based graft affecting the UK Government's

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benefit systems and individual Britons themselves, we anticipate domestic concerns will continue to trump any UK interest in taking a hard-line stance on high-level political corruption in Nigeria.

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